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May 18, 2009

Council Member Nestor R. Garcia, Chair
Council Member Gary H. Okino, Vice Chair
Honolulu City Council Budget Committee
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Testimony in Opposition to Bill 16 CD 1, Approving the Executive Capital Budget Program

Aloha Council Members Garcia, Okino and Members of the Committee:


I am Betsy Connors, President of The Outdoor Circle, speaking in opposition to Bill 16 CD1 which asks for approximately \$1 billion in funding to build the first phase of the transit project. Our organization is NOT anti-transit. However we feel the transit project as it's been proposed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not in the best interest of Oahu's citizens. We are not here today to discuss the negative impacts we believe the proposal will have on the visual environment but what we are here to say is that this funding request, no matter what system is built, is premature.

The Final EIS should be completed and the project accepted by both the State and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) before this Council agrees to fund the program with taxpayer money. Planning should come first...and then construction.

We also believe it is premature to dedicate taxpayer money for interest by issuing general obligation bonds without assurances from the FTA that federal money will be forthcoming.

Therefore we urge this committee to oppose the line item in the budget for the Honolulu High Capacity Transit Project.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.


Betsy Connors
President

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